mentioned in the House that the death toll had gone up to 92. The Central Government's intervention was sought in this regard.

The Central Government had also received alarming reports relating to violence in connection with the Panchayat polls from other quarters. The reports received from the Government of West Bengal in connection with this matter were incomplete. Hence, it was considered necessary to depute a Central team to West Bengal to assess the situation.

Article 355

4651. DR. Y. RADHAKRISHNA MURTY:
SHRI NILOTPAL BASU:

Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to refer to Unstarred Question 2354 given in the Rajya Sabha on 7th July, 1998, and state:

(a) whether Article 355 appearing under Part XVIII of the Constitution deals with emergency provisions;

(b) since how long before the despatch of the Central team to West Bengal, the State Government failed to keep the Central Government "Posted with the goings on in the State" through written communication or otherwise;

(c) if so, whether such lapse is unique to West Bengal; and

(d) if not, the names of other States and the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI L.K. ADVANI): (a) It is true that article 355 figures in Part XVIII of the Constitution of India relating to Emergency provisions. However, the said article casts a duty on the Union to protect every State not only against external aggression but also internal disturbance and to ensure that the government of every State is carried on in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution of India.

(b) to (d) Some Hon'ble Members had expressed serious concern in the Lok Sabha on June 9, 1998 regarding the atrocities committed on women in West Bengal. It was stated that during the recent panchayat elections several women candidates had been subjected to inhuman treatment, including gangrape, and that several party workers had been killed during the election process. It was mentioned in the House that the death toll had gone up to 92. The Central Government's intervention was sought in this regard.

The Central Government had also received alarming reports relating to violence in connection with the Panchayat polls from other quarters. The reports received from the Government of West Bengal in connection with this matter were incomplete. Hence, it was considered necessary to depute a Central team to West Bengal to assess the situation.

Analysis and assessment of law and order and security scenario in the country is an ongoing process in the Central Government. Central officials are deputed to the States in this connection, when considered necessary.

Protection of Crops

4652. DR. Y. LAKSHMI PRASAD: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the details of problems expressed by the border farmers of Punjab for protecting their crops against damages; and

(b) the action proposed to solve their genuine grievances?

THE MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI L.K. ADVANI): (a) and (b) Border fencing and floodlighting have been erected all along the Indo-Pak border in Punjab at some distances from the international border. Except in reverine areas along this border, the land